A
True Deſcription out of the Word of God
Of the viſible Church.

AS there is but *a* one God and Father of all, one Lord over all, and one Spirit: So is there but *b* one truth, one Faith, one Salvation, one Church, called in one hope, joyned in one profeſſion, guided by one *c* rule, even the Word of the moſt high. *a Gen.* 1.1. *Exod.* 20.3. *b* 1 *Tim.* 2.4. *Phil.* 1.27. *Ephe.* 2.18. *Ioh.* 8.41. *c Deut.* 6.25. *Rom.* 10.8. 2 *Tim.* 3.15. *Ioh.* 8.51. 1 *Ioh.* 2.3.4. *&c.*

This Church as it is univerſally underſtood, containeth in it all the *a* Elect of God that have been, are, or ſhalbe; But being conſidered more particularly, as it is ſeen in the preſent world, is conſiſteth of a company and fellowſhip of *b* Faithfull and holy people, *c* gathered in the name of Chriſt Jeſus, their onely *d* King, *e* Prieſt, and *f* Prophet, *g* worſhipping him aright, being *h* peaceably and quietly governed by his Officers and Lawes, *i* keeping the unity of Faith in the bond of peace and *k* love unfained. *a Geneſ.* 17 *chap.* 1 *Pet.* 1,2, *Revel.* 7,9, 1 *Cor.* 10,3 *Ioh.* 17,10,20, *b Pſal.* 111,1, *&* 140,1, *Iſa.* 62,12, *Epheſ.* 1,1, 1 *Cor.* 1,2, *Deut.* 14,2, *c Deut.* 12,5, *Ioh.* 6,37, *&* 3,14, *&* 12,32, *Luke* 17,7, *d Gen.* 44,20, *Pſal.* 45,6, *Zach.* 9,9, *Heb.* 1,8, *e Rom.* 8,34, *Ieh.* 17 *chap. Heb* 5 9, *&* 8,1, *&* 4,14, *f Deut.* 18,14. *Mat.* 17,5, *Heb.* 1,2, *Gen.* 14,18, *g Exod.* 20,4,5,6,7,8, *Lev.* *Lev.* 10,5, *Ioh.* 4123, *h Mat.* 11,29, 1 *Cor.* 11,16, *Mat.* 13,34, *Rev.* 22,9, *i Epheſ.* 4,3, 1 *Cor.* 1,13, *Mat.* 9,50, *k Ieh.* 13,34, 1 *Cor.* 13,4, 1 *Pet.* 1,22, 1 *Ieh.* 3,18.

Moſt *a* joyfull, excellent, and glorious things are every where in the Scriptures ſpoken of this Church. It is called the *b* Cittie, *c* Houſe, *d* Temple, and *e* mountain of the eternall God: the *f* choſen generation, the holy nation, the peculiar people, the *g* vineyard, the *h* garden encloſed, the Spring ſhut up, the Sealed Fountaine, the orchyard of pomgranates with ſweet Fruits, the *i* Heritage, the *k* Kingdome of Chriſt;

yea

yea his * ſiſter, his love, his ſpouſe, his / Queen, and his *m* bodie, the joy of the whole earth. To this ſocietie is the *n* covenant and all the promiſes made of *o* peace, of love, and of *p* ſalvation, of the *q* preſence of God, of his graces, of his power, and of his *r* protection. *a Pſal.* 87.3. *b Ibid.* *c* 1 *Tim.*3,15. *Heb.*3,6. *d* 1 *Cor.*3,17. *e Iſa.*2,2. *Mich.*4,1. *Zach.*8,3. *f* 1 *Pet.*2,9. *g Iſaiah.*5,1, *&* 27,2. *h Song* 4,12. *Iſa.*51,3. *i Iſa.*19,25 *k Micha.*5 2. *Mat.*3,2. *Ioh* 3,5. * *Song.*5 2. / *Pſal.*45,9. *m* 1 *Cor.* 12, 27, *Epheſ* 1,23. *n Gal.*4 28, *Rom.*9 4. *o Pſalm* 147,14. 2 *Theſ.*3,16. *p Iſa.*46 13. *Zach.*14 17. *q Ia.*60 *ch: Ezech.*47 *ch. Zach.*4,12. *r Ezech:* 48 35, *Mat.*28,20, *Iſa* 62 *chap.*

And ſurely if this Church be conſidered in her parts, it ſhall appeare moſt beautifull, yea moſt wonderfull, and even *a* raviſhing the ſenſes to conceive, much more to behold, what then to enjoy ſo bleſſed a communion. For behold, her *b* King and Lord is the King of peace, & Lord himſelfe of all glorie. She enjoyeth moſt holy and heavenly *c* Lawes, moſt faithfull and vigilant *d* Paſtors, moſt ſincere and pure *e* Teachers, moſt carefull and upright *f* Governours, moſt diligent and truſtie *g* Deacons, moſt loving & ſober *h* Releevers and a moſt humble meek, obedient, faithfull and loving people, everie *k* ſtone living elect and precious, every ſtone hath his beautie, his / burden, and his *m* order. All bound to *n* edifie one another, exhort, reprove, and comfort one another *o* lovingly as to their owne members, *p* faithfull as in the eyes of God. *a Song* 6,4 9. *b Iſa.*62,11, *Ioh.* 12 15, *Heb* 2,7,8. *c Mat.*11,30, 1 *Iohn* 5,3. *d Ephe.*4,11, *Act:*20 *ch.* *e Rom.*12,7. *f* 1 *Cor.*12 28. *Rom.* 12 8. *g Act.*6 *ch.* *h Rom* 12,8. *i Mat:*5,5. *Ezec.*36, 8, *Iſa:*60,8, *Deut:* 18 9--13. *k* 1 *Pet.*2,5. 1 *King* 7,9. *Zach.*14,21. / *Gal.*6,2. *m* 1 *Cor.* 12 *ch. Rom.*12,3, *&c.* *n Heb.*10,24. *o Lev.*19,17. 1 *Theſ.*4,9. *p Col* 3 23. 1 *Ioh:*2, 20.

No *a* Office here is ambitiouſly affected, no *b* Law wronfully wreſted or *c* wilfully neglected, no *d* truth hid or perverted, *e* every one here hath freedome and power (not diſturbing the peaceable order of the Church) to utter his complaints and griefes, and freely to reprove the tranſgreſſion and errours of any without exception of perſons. *a* 2 *Cor.* 2,17, 3 *Ioh* 9. *b* 1 *Tim.*4 2,3, *&* 5,21, *&* 6,14, *Gal.*6,12. *c* 1 *Cor.*5. *d Lev.* 23,28. 1 *Tim.*3,15. *e* 1 *Cor.*6, *&* 14 30. *Col.*4,17.

Here is no *a* intruſion or climing up another way into the ſheepfold, then *b* by the holy and free Election of the Lords holy and free people, and that according to the Lords ordinance, humbling themſelves by faſting

ſting and prayer before the Lord, cravir g the direction of his holy Spirit, for the triall and approving of guifts, &c. *a Ioh.* 10, 1. *b Act.* 1, 23, & 6, 3, & 14, 23.

Thus they orderly proceede to ordination by ſaſting and prayer, in which *a* action the Apoſtles uſed laying on of hands. Thus hath every one of the people intereſt in the election and ordination of their Officers, as alſo in the adminiſtration of their offices, upon *b* tranſgreſſion, offence, abuſe, &c. having an eſpeciall care unto the inviolable order of the Church, as is aforelaid. *a* 1 *Tim.* 4, 14, & 5, 22. *b Luk.* 17. 3. *Rom.* 16, 17, *Col.* 4, 17.

Likewiſe in this Church they have holy *a* lawes, as limits and bonds, which it is lawfull at no hand to tranſgreſſe. They have lawes to direct them in the choiſe of every officer, what kind of men the Lord will have. Their Paſtor muſt be apt to *b* teach, no yong Scholer, *c* able to divide the word aright, *d* holding faſt that Faithfull Word, according to doctrine, that he may be able alſo to exhort, rebuke, improve, with wholſome doctrine, and to convince them that ſay againſt it: He muſt be *e* a man that loveth goodneſſe; He muſt be wiſe, righteous, holy, temperate; He muſt be of life unreprovable, as Gods Steward; He moſt be generally well reported off, and one that ruleth his owne houſhold under obedience with all honeſtie; He muſt be modeſt, humble, meek, gentle, and loving; He muſt be a man of great *f* patience, compaſſion, labour, and diligence; Hee muſt alwayes be carefull and watchfull over the flock whereof the Lord hath made him overſeer, with all willingnes & chearefulnes, not holding his office in reſpect of perſons, but doing his duetie to every Soule, as hee will anſwer before the chiefe Shepheard, &c. *a Mat:* 5, 19. 1 *Tim:* 1, 18. *b Deut:* 33, 10, *Mat:* 2, 7, 1 *Tim:* 3, 1, *&c.* *c* 2 *Tim* 2, 15. *d Tit:* 1, 9, 2 *Tim* 4. 2 *e Tit:* 1 7, 8. *f Num:* 12, 3, 7, *Iſa:* 59, 4, 5, 6, *Ier:* 3, 15, *Ezek:* 34, 18, *Act:* 20 *ch.* 1 *Pet:* 5, 1, 2, 3, 4. 1 *Iim:* 5 21.

Their Doctor or Teacher muſt be a man apt to teach, able to divide the word of God aright, and to deliver ſound and wholeſome doctrine from the ſame, ſtill building upon that ſound ground-worke, hee muſt be mightie in the Scriptures, able to convince the gainſayers, and carefull to deliver his doctrine pure, ſound and plaine, not with curioſitie or affectation, but ſo that it may edifie the moſt ſimple, approving it to every mans conſcience: he muſt be of life unreproveable, one that can

governe his owne Houſhold; He muſt be of manners ſober, temperate, modeſt, gentle, and loving, &c. 1 *Tim.3.chap. Tuus 1 chap.* 2 *Tim.2.15.* 1 *Cor.1.17.* and 2.4.

Their Elders muſt be of wiſdome and judgement endued with the Spirit of God, able to diſcerne between cauſe and cauſe, between plea & plea, and accordingly to prevent and redreſſe evils, alwayes vigilant and intending to ſee the ſtatutes, ordinances, and lawes of God kept in the Church, and that not onely by the people in obedience, but to ſee the Officers do their dueties. Theſe men muſt be of life likewiſe unreproveable, governing their owne Families orderly, they muſt be alſo of manners ſober, gentle, modeſt, loving, tempetate, &c. *Numb.11.24.25.* 2 *Chron.19.8. Act.15 ch.* 1 *Tim.3,& 5 chap.*

Their Deacons muſt be men of honeſt report, having the myſterie of the faith in a pure conſcience, endued with the Holy Ghoſt; they muſt be grave, temperate, not given to exceſſe, nor to filthy lucre. *Acts 6,3.* 1 *Tim.3,8 9.*

Their Relievers or Widowes muſt be women of 60 yeares of age at the leaſt, for avoyding of inconveniences: they muſt be well reported off for good works, ſuch as have nouriſhed their children, ſuch as have been harberous to ſtrangers: diligẽ & ſerviceable to the Saints, compaſſionate and helpful to them in adverſitie, given to every good work, continuing in Supplications and prayers night and day. 1 *Tim.5.9.10.*

Theſe Officers muſt firſt be duely proved, then if they be found blameles, adminiſter, &c. 1 *Tim.3,10.*

Now as the perſons, guifts, conditions, manners, life, and proofe of theſe Officers, is ſet downe by the Holy Ghoſt; So are their Offices limited, ſevered, and divers. 1 *Cor.12.12.18.28.*

The Paſtors Office is, to feed the ſheep of Chriſt in green and wholeſome paſtures of his word, and lead them to the ſtill waters, even to the pure Fountaine and River of Life. He muſt guide and keep thoſe ſheep by that heavenly ſheephook and paſtorall ſtaffe of the word, therby drawing them to him, thereby looking into their Soules, even into their moſt ſecret thoughts: Thereby diſcerning their diſeaſes, and therby curing them: applying to every diſeaſe a fitt and convenient medicine, and according to the qualitie & danger of the diſeaſe, give warning to the Church, that they may orderly proceede to excommunication.

Further

Further, he must by this his sheephook watch over and defend his flock from ravenous beasts, and the Wolfe, and rake the little Foxes, &c. *Psal.* 23. *Lev.* 10, 10, 11. *Num.* 18, 1, *Ezek.* 44. 23, & 33. & 34, *Iob*, 21, 15, *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 5 1--4. *Zach.* 11, 7, *Revel.* 22, 2, *Luke* 12, 42, 2 *Cor.* 10, 7, 5, *Heb.* 4, 12, *Iohn* 10, 11, 12, *Song* 2, 15.

The Doctors Office is already set downe in his description: His speciall care must bee, to build upon the onely true ground-worke, golde, silver, and precious stones, that his worke may endure the triall of the fire, and by the light of the same fire, reveale the Tymber, Hay, & Stubble of false Teachers; Hee must take diligent heed to keepe the Church from errours. And further, he must deliver his doctrine so plainely, simply, and purely, that the Church may increase with the increasing of God, and grow up unto him, which is the Head, Christ Jesus. 1 *Cor.* 3. 11, 12, *Lev.* 10, 10, *Ezech.* 33, 1, 2, *&c. and* 44, 24. *Mal.* 2, 6, 1 *Cor.* 3, 11, 1 *Cor.* 1, 17 1 *Tim* 4, 16, & 6, 20, *Ephe* 2, 20, *Heb.* 6, 1, 1 *Pet.* 2, 2.

The Office of the Auncients is expressed in their description: Their especiall care must be, to see the ordinances of God, truely taught and practized, aswell by the Officers in doing their duety uprightly, as to see that the people obey willingly and readily. It is their duety to see the Congregation holily and quietly ordered, and no way disturbed, by the contentions and disobedient, froward and obstinate; not taking away the liberty of the least, but upholding the right of al, wisely judging of times and circumstances. They must be ready assistants to the Pastors and Teachers, helping to bear their burdē, but not intruding into their office. *Num.* 11, 16 *Deut.* 1, 15 & 16, 18, 2 *Chro.* 19 8, *Exo.* 39. 42. 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. 2 *Tim.* 1, 13, 1 *Cor.* 11 16, *and* 15, 33, *Gal.* 2, 4. 5, 14, *Col.* 4, 16, 17, *Act.* 20. 1 *Pet.* 5, 1, *Rom.* 12, 8.

The Deacons office is, faithfully to gather & collect by the ordinance of the Church, the goods, and benevolence of the faithfull, and by the same direction, diligently and truftily to distribute them according to the necessity of the Saincts. Further, they must enquire and consider of the proportion of the wants, both of the Officers and other poore, and accordingly relate unto the Church, that provision may be made. *Act.* 6, *Rom.* 12 8

The Relievers & Widowes office is, to minister to the sick, lame, weary, and diseased such helpefull comforts as they need, by watching, tending, and helping them; Further, they must shew good Example to the

yonger Women, in ſober, modeſt, and godly converſation, avoyding idlenes, vaine talke, and light behaviour, *Rom.12,8, 1 Tim.5,9, &c.*

Theſe Officers, though they be divers and ſeverall, yet are they not ſevered, leaſt there ſhould be a diviſion in the bodie, but they are as members of the bodie, having the ſame care one of another, jointly doing their ſeverall dueties to the ſervice of the Saincts, and to the edification of the Bodie of Chriſt, till wee all meete together in the perfect meaſure of the fulneſſe of Chriſt, by whom all the bodie being in the meane while thus coupled and knit together by every joint for the furniture thereof, according to the effectuall power which is in the meaſure of every part, receiveth increaſe of the bodie, unto the edifying of it ſelfe in love: neither can any of theſe Officers be wanting, without grievous lamenes, and apparant deformitie of the bodie, yea violent injurie to the Head Chriſt Jeſus. *Luk.9,46,47,48. Joh.13,12..17. 1 Cor:12, 12,25,28. Epheſ: 4,11,12,13,16.*

Thus this holy Armie of Saincts, is marſhalled here in earth by theſe Officers, under the conduct of their glorious Emperour CHRIST, that victorious Michaell. Thus it marcheth in this moſt heavenly order, and gracious araye, againſt all Enimies both bodily and ghoſtly: peaceable in it ſelfe as Ieruſalem, terrible to the enemy as an Army with baners, triumphing over their tyrannie with patience, their crueltie with meekenes, and over Death it ſelfe with dying. Thus through the blood of that ſpotles Lambe, and that Word of their teſtimony, they are more then Conquerours, bruſing the head of the Serpent; yea through the power of his Word, they have power to caſt down Sathan like lightning; to tread upon Serpents and Scorpions; to caſt downe ſtrong holds, and every thing that exalteth it ſelfe againſt God. The gates of Hell, and all the Principalities and powers of the world, ſhall not prevaile againſt it. *Rom:12 ch. 1 Cor:12. Rev 14,1,2. Song 6,3. Rev,12,11. Luke 10, 18,19. 2 Cor:10,5. Mat:16,18. Rom: 8,38,39.*

Further, he hath given them the keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven, that whoſoever they binde in earth by his Word, ſhalbe bound in Heaven: and whoſoever they looſe on Earth, ſhalbe looſed in Heaven. *Mat.16,19. Joh,20,23. Mat.18,18*

Now this power which Chriſt hath given unto his Church, and to every member of his Church, to keepe it in order, hee hath not left it to their diſcretions and luſtes to be uſed or neglected as they will, but in his

his last Will and Testament, hee hath left downe both an order of proceeding, and an end to which it is used. *Mat.* 16,16,19. & 18,15,16, 17,18 & 28,20. *Deut.* 12 31,32. *Rev.* 22, 18 19.

If the fault be private, holy and loving admonition & reproof is to be used with an inward desire and earnest care to winne their brother; But if he will not heare, yet to take one or two other brethren with him, whom hee knoweth most meet for that purpose, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be confirmed: And if he refuse to heare them, then to declare the matter to the Church, which ought severely and sharpely to reprehend, gravely to admonish, and lovingly to perswade the partie offending: shewing him the heynousnes of his offence and the danger of his obstinacie, and the fearefull judgements of the Lord. *Lev.* 19.17.18. *Mat.* 18.15. *Deut.* 19.15. *Mat.* 18.16.

All this notwithstanding the Church is not to hold him as an enemy but to admonish him and pray for him as a Brother, proving if at any time the Lord will give him repentance. For this power is not given them to the destruction of any, but to the edification of all. 2 *Thes.* 3.15. 1 *Cor.* 10 8. *and* 13.10.

If this prevaile not to draw him to repentance, then are they in the Name and power of the Lord JESUS, with the whole Congregation, reverently in prayer to proceed to excommunication, that is unto the casting him out of their Congregation and fellowship, covenant & protection of the Lord, for his disobedience and obstinacie, and committing him to Sathan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus if such be his good will and pleasure. *Mat.* 18.17. 1 *Cor.* 5.11.

Further, they are to warne the whole Congregation and all other faithfull, to hold him as a Heathen and Publicane, and to abstaine themselves from his Societie, as not to eate or drinke with him, &c. unlesse it be such as of necessity must needs, as his Wife, his Children, and Family; Yet these (if they be members of the Church) are not to joyne to him in spirituall exercise. *Mat.* 18.17. 1 *Cor.* 5.11.

If the offence be publike, the partie is publiquely to be reproved, and admonished: if he then repent not, to proceed to excommunication, as aforesaid. 1 *Tim.* 5.20. *Gal.* 2.14. *Jos.* 7.19. 2 *Cor.* 7.9.

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The repentance of the partie must be proportionable to the offence, viz. If the offence be publique, publique; If private, private; humbled, submissive, sorrowfull, unfained, giving glorie to the Lord. *Lev.* 19. 17,18, *Pro:*10, 12, *Rom.*12,19, & 13,10, & 14,1.

There must great care be had of admonition, that they be not captious or curious finding fault where none is: neither yet in bitternes or reproach: For that were to destroy and not to save our brother: but they must be carefully done, with prayer going before, they must be seasoned with truth, gravitie, love, and peace. *Mat.*18.15. and 26.8. *Gal.*6.12. 2 *Tim:*1,24, *Marke* 9,59, *Ephes.*4,29, *Jam:*5, 15.19,20.

Moreover, in this Church is an especiall care had by every member thereof, of offences: The Strong ought not to offend the Weake, nor the weake to judge the strong: but all graces here are given to the service and edification of each other in love and long suffering, *Luk.*17. 1, *Pro*, 20,22, *Rom.*14,13,19, *Gal.*6,2.

In this Church is the Trueth purely taught, and surely kept: Here is the Covenant, the Sacraments, and promises, the graces, the glorie, the presence, the worship of God, &c. *Gen.*17 *ch. Lev.*26.11.12. *Isa.*44.3, *Gal.*4,28, & 6,16, *Isa.*60,15, *Deut.* 4,12,13, *Isa.*56,7, 1 *Tim.*3,15, *Isa.*52,8

Into this Temple entreth no uncleane thing, neither whatsoever worketh abominations or lyes, but they which are written in the Lambs Book of life. *Isa:*52,1, *Ezek:*44,9, *Isa:*35,8, *Zach:*14,21, *Rev:*21,27.

But without this CHURCH shalbe doggs and Enchaunters, and Whoremongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh lyes. *Rom.*2.9. *Rev.*22.15.

FINIS.